

# SAFEGUARDING



*“Preventing harm to people – and the environment “*



May 2023

**CONTENTS .....**

**What to find in this guide?**

- Understanding Safeguarding.....
- What is safeguarding? .....
- The four elements to safeguarding .....
- Steps in safeguarding.....
- Conclusions and what's next? .....
- Planning and implementing a strategic approach to safeguarding .....
- Annex: resource.....

**Acronyms**

<b>COP</b>	<b>Community of practice</b>
<b>MO</b>	<b>Member organisation</b>
<b>CPF</b>	<b>Child protection focal point</b>
<b>SGO</b>	<b>Safeguarding officer</b>
<b>CPO</b>	<b>Child Protection Officer</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Caritas is formally linked to the Catholic Church as its social ministry in Africa. The African region, as one of the seven (7) (regions of the Caritas Internationalis Confederation (CIC) which has 162 MOs. Caritas Africa is a network of 46 national Caritas organisations in 46 countries, including adjacent islands in Atlantic and Indian ocean.

This guide aims to help Caritas organizations on safeguarding, assessing the risks associated with their work and ensuring that organization's safeguarding policy and processes adequately address these risks. The guide draws from the experiences of various Caritas, encouraging sharing of experiences and information and to stimulate and encourage discussion among member organizations (MO) about safeguarding and its relation to the mission of Caritas organizations. We have drawn understanding from safeguarding and child protection policies within the confederation. This guide is a culmination of the information, deliberations, experiences, successes and challenges shared so far.

Through this guide, like many other resources around safeguarding, Caritas will ensure that all staff and partners as well as other stakeholders are aware of the risks and threats towards having a safe environment for people, especially children and vulnerable adults. The guide creates awareness and pointers on good practice that MOs can follow to minimise the risk. As we continue to work with children, families and adults, Caritas continues to ensure that safeguarding officers (SGO) Child Protection Officers (CPO), designated safeguarding focal points and all staff are equipped to handle all issues related to safeguarding.

## **STEPS IN SAFEGUARDING**

### **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children vulnerable adults- people with disability, people living in extreme poverty and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means: protecting them from abuse and maltreatment. This guide will help you set up safeguarding measures in your organization. It has been written for leaders of communities of practice (COP), the faithful, and member groups working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Organisations such as Caritas that work in development, humanitarian and social justice need to ensure their staff operations and programmes do not cause any harm to anyone, especially to children and vulnerable adults. This can be achieved by ensuring that they put in place mechanisms and processes to recognise, prevent, report and respond situations of concern. Caritas has invested substantial resources in strengthening safeguarding standards around the world. Policies and procedures are made available and this guide is an added resource. It shares in summary some of the main safeguarding aspects that every Caritas organisation should consider.

### **The four elements to safeguarding**

**Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.

In this regard, the safeguarding policy is the crucial thing to do. Basing on the previous case studies (if any), research, knowledge and experience, the organization can start to draft the safeguarding policy.

After, you make it accessible to everyone it concerns (staff members, managers, volunteers, interns and consultants. Hereafter are the other tasks to do for the prevention in safeguarding<sup>1</sup>:

-Appoint a safeguarding lead or group: they oversee the safeguarding strategies and practice in the organization.

-Ensure the Board of Directors and the Management team are informed of the policy and procedures: keep them updated on the safeguarding activity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-checklist-prevention/>

-The organization should regularly offer training and awareness courses on the safeguarding to the staff, not only to those who show an interest in the issues.

-Make sure every staff, Board of directors' members, volunteers, interns and consultant sign a safeguarding acknowledgement.

-The organization should commit to regular safety and risk assessments, to ensure that it is not placing staff, or the people using its service (activities...) at risk.

### **Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need**

The organization will commit to put measures that can help to stop any kind of harm and abuse from occurring and offer help and support to those at risk.

### **Partnership – Local solutions through services working with their communities**

The organizations work together with the local communities to get solutions and assist in preventing and detecting abuse or any kind of harm.

In this way, the organizations raise awareness around safeguarding issues. When the local communities understand how abuse, harm and neglect can be spotted, prevented, and reported, then children and vulnerable people living in that community stand a better chance of being protected.

### **Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.**

Everyone must be accountable and have complete transparency in delivering safeguarding to safeguarding the children and vulnerable people. Everyone is accountable for their actions as individuals, organization.

## **Steps in safeguarding**

### ***Safeguarding (Risk) Assessment***

-Elaboration of the self-assessment tool

-The safeguarding risk assessment helps to identify the individuals (in this case there are children and vulnerable people) that interact with your organization and who may be at risk of harm. Once identified, you put the safeguards to protect them (prevent them from harm). Following are its steps<sup>2</sup>:

- Consider **who might be at risk** of harm within your organization. This includes not only the people you work with, but also staff members, volunteers, and visitors;
- Identify **what type of harm** they might be at risk of and how likely it that they will be harmed is. This may include physical, sexual, emotional, financial abuse;
- **Prioritize the risks** depending on level of likelihood and impact. The higher the likelihood and impact, the higher the priority;
- **Put safeguards and resources in place** to protect against these risks. This might involve implementing **safeguarding policies and training** staff members about them.
- Monitor and review your safeguarding arrangements on a regular basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

#### **1.3.1 Identifying leaders**

Training the staff on the safeguarding and identifying the leaders. Ensure they understand their role and are able to offer positive leadership behaviors. Among other things, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure that all safeguarding cases are kept confidential and stored securely.

#### **1.3.2 Getting support/buy in**

Top managers in the MO should ensure that safeguarding is prioritized as it hinges on the credibility of both staff and the organisation as a whole. They should put up safeguarding policy

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-conduct-safeguarding-risk-assessments-like-pro-eunice-muturi/>

and ensure that staff are familiar with it and adhere to it. Once the managers have a buy in, then they promote training and capacity building in the area of safeguarding.

### **1.3.3 Policy statement**

Every Caritas organisation is required to adopt a safeguarding policy. This policy should describe how the organisation expects its staff and volunteers to protect children and vulnerable adults from all forms of exploitation and abuse.

The policy statements must reaffirm the MOs commitment and acknowledgement of their duty of care to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children and an vulnerable adults (people at risk) The statement elaborates the MOs commitment to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice .The policy statement makes it clear what MO will do to keep children and vulnerable adults safe.

### **1.3.4 Set up Procedure**

As a matter of priority, safeguarding policies and structures need to be embedded - even mainstreamed - into the day-to-day operations of Caritas MOs. Safeguarding must be seen to be expressed in the mission of the organisation. There must be processes and procedures that guide staff on how to handle safeguarding issues from identification, management and possibly referrals. These should be readily available to you as an employee (and to the public)

### **1.3.5 Identify staff**

Through assessments, staff can be identified for both key roles and other roles in handling safeguarding in a member organisation, Safeguarding in your organisation may not be managed by a single individual – it could also be covered by a team. It might only be part of their job, but identifying the overall person responsible is still key.

### **1.3.6 Information in place**

Safeguarding policies and general information should be publicly available. This means utilizing your online platforms such as website and social media. Once you have always ensure that the information is up-to-date and presented in a way that makes it easy to understand and digest. It will also help if you can monitor insights to see if the resource is being accessed.



## **Conclusions and what's next?**

Children, vulnerable adults and generally people at risk have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, and for Caritas MOs it is important that its staff have a clear set of guidelines about how to handle safeguarding. This can only be achieved by putting safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, supported by good governance, staff supervision and management.

## **Planning and implementing a strategic approach to safeguarding**

Our safeguarding strategies must be based on our priorities. They should also be premised on a workforce that understands the risks and harms that threaten the safety of children and vulnerable adults and be equipped to respond expediently. Exemplary are strategies such as that of the British council <sup>i</sup>

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<sup>ii</sup> ([https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british\\_council\\_global\\_safeguarding\\_strategy\\_june\\_2020.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british_council_global_safeguarding_strategy_june_2020.pdf))

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**Resources**

**CARITAS S DIOCESE OF SALFORD SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT**

**THE GLOBAL SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY**

**ZCCB CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS**

**CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS MANAGEMENT STANDARD ON SAFEGUARDING**

**KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022**